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Chair: Mr. Haniff ..... (Malaysia)
later: Ms. Critchlow (Vice-Chair) ..... (Guyana)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 64: Report of the Human Rights Council (A/66/53 and A/66/335)

1. **Ms. Dupuy Lasserre** (President, Human Rights Council), introducing the report of the Human Rights Council on its sixteenth and seventeenth sessions and fourteenth to seventeenth special sessions (A/66/53), said that 2011 marked the fifth year since the establishment of the Human Rights Council. The Council had conducted a review of its functioning, and the report on its outcome had been adopted by the General Assembly.

2. As follow-up to the review of the Council's work, she had established a task force of members from its Bureau, the United Nations Office at Geneva and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which would submit recommendations to the Council at its next session in March 2012. The Council was implementing the recommendations concerning the universal periodic review and the selection of the special procedures mandate holders, and would be holding its first annual high-level panel on human rights mainstreaming within the United Nations system at that session.

3. The review process had generated awareness of the importance of cross regional work and the use of different tools to foster country cooperation for a positive impact on the situation on the ground. Momentum had built towards a proactive review process that was based on consensus when possible, using the toolkit from the Council's institution-building package.

4. During the past year, the Council had demonstrated its ability to respond to human rights crises through special sessions on Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic and the commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions it had established to make recommendations relating to serious human rights violations. It had also increased its interaction with the High Commissioner for Human Rights through interactive dialogues on the basis of the High Commissioner's reports and on specific country situations in Côte d'Ivoire, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and Belarus.

5. A new special procedures mandate had been established on the right of freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, and at its next session, the Council would hold panels and thematic discussions on issues including the protection of freedom of expression on the Internet, discriminatory laws and practices and acts of violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity, and the administration of justice and technical cooperation.

6. Turning to the annual report, she noted that the Council had addressed a range of human rights issues and held various meetings and panel discussions on topics which included the rights of victims of terrorism, the human rights aspects of terrorist hostage taking, children working or living on the street, the human rights of people of African descent and the realization of the right to development. It had adopted a record of 35 resolutions, decisions and President's statements, and had launched a number of cross-regional initiatives. Five new special procedures had been established, bringing the total number of mandates to 44. The Council had enhanced its standard setting role by drawing on the work of its subsidiary bodies, and had submitted a draft declaration on human rights education and training and an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure to the General Assembly for adoption.

7. The Working Group on the universal periodic review had concluded its review of all 193 Member States, including South Sudan, on 17 October. The Working Group's second cycle would be extended from four to four-and-a-half years, reviewing 14 instead of 16 countries in each session; the time available for each review would be extended from three to three and a half hours. Those adjustments would require some additional financial and human resources in terms of conference services. She called on States to provide previously requested resources or at least the minimum number of permanent posts for ensuring the timely translation of documents, and urged them to lend their support in addressing issues of great importance to the Council, particularly the establishment of fact-finding missions and commissions of inquiry, by working with their counterparts in the Fifth Committee.

8. **Ms. Nemroff** (United States of America) said that the Human Rights Council's accomplishments over the past year had been impressive. Highlights included its timely and decisive establishment of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the commissions of inquiry for Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic, as

well as the resolution adopted by consensus to renew the mandate of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Sudan, noting concern about the humanitarian situations in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. She also welcomed efforts to highlight abuses faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons around the world, an issue which would require sustained attention by the Council, as well as its resolution adopted by consensus on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief.

9. Nevertheless, it was regrettable that the Council devoted a permanent agenda item to issues related to one country, Israel, that focus was disproportionate and diminished the Council's credibility and effectiveness.

10. She asked how the Council would address human right issues arising in the context of the Arab Spring and ensure that emerging democracies respected human rights during the transition period.

11. **Ms. Rasheed** (Observer for Palestine), recalling the suffering inflicted on the Palestinian people and damage to infrastructure as a result of the war waged on Gaza by the Israeli occupying forces in 2008 as well as the continuing blockade, asked what steps United Nations bodies such as the General Assembly, Human Rights Council, Secretary-General, or the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights could take to ensure that the perpetrators of those crimes, including war crimes, were brought to justice and the recommendations from the report of the fact-finding mission on the Gaza conflict were fully implemented given the difficulties the Security Council had been facing in discussing and taking action on that issue.

12. **Ms. Reckinger** (Observer for the European Union), welcoming the leading role the Council had played in responding to urgent country situations in recent months, asked how the Council could ensure swift and comprehensive follow-up to its special sessions. She would be interested to hear how the second cycle of the universal periodic review could contribute to effective follow-up on implementation of the recommendations from the first cycle. She would also like to know how the President planned to enhance awareness of the Council's work at Headquarters and what her expectations were for the panel discussion on human rights mainstreaming throughout the United Nations system planned for March 2012.

13. **Ms. Horsington** (Australia) urged all nations to build on the human rights dialogue by involving civil society in ongoing reforms, as the second cycle of the universal periodic review approached, and to adopt practical and sustainable responses to human rights situations worldwide. To that end, her Government continued to promote and fund practical initiatives to improve the observance of human rights, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. She asked how the consideration of human rights could be further integrated into processes across the United Nations system, including at Headquarters.

14. **Mr. Kimura** (Japan) said that the Government of Japan welcomed the special sessions that the Council had convened in response to serious human rights violations and its urgent dispatch of international commissions of inquiry and adoption of resolutions which sent strong messages to the international community. He asked for an assessment of the review process and what the Council's next steps and priorities would be. While agreement had been reached at Headquarters on aligning the Council's work with its membership and reporting cycle, and on options for the implementation of urgent mandates, it was regrettable that no agreement had been reached on improving its election process or on strengthening implementation of the General Assembly resolution on the Council's funding.

15. **Mr. Hauri** (Switzerland) said that his Government appreciated the Council's promotion of a victim-based approach in addressing urgent matters. He asked what response could be given to those who claimed that the Council did not react adequately to situations of serious human rights violations, and how the Council could further strengthen its capacity to adapt in response to the surge in popular democratic uprisings in the world.

16. Noting his Government's commitment to the strengthening of the Council's work in human rights education and training, the promotion of truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-repetition, and the theme of human rights in the context of peaceful protests, he asked what areas the President wished to see strengthened.

17. In the light of the Secretary-General's welcome plans to increase the budget for activities related to human rights and the Council, sustainable solutions were needed for financing and implementation of

urgent measures in particular. A mechanism similar to the one available to the Secretary-General for unexpected and extraordinary expenses should be set up to address human rights matters. He asked what could be done to ensure that the Council and High Commissioner for Human Rights had the means to implement urgent measures.

18. Lastly, while the increased visibility of human rights within the United Nations system was welcome, the Council's membership must continue to strive for a strong, efficient and transparent institution. It was regrettable that the review of the Council had not enabled the present dialogue to be held in the plenary of the General Assembly.

19. **Mr. Frick** (Liechtenstein) welcomed the interactive discussion which had been the result of the review of the Council, and the clear division of labour established between the Third Committee and the plenary of the General Assembly in addressing the substance of the report and decisions of the Council. He hoped that the call to establish proper funding mechanisms in the General Assembly to account for urgent and unexpected expenses from Council mandates would be heeded when the Fifth Committee took up the matter.

20. He wished to know how the close cooperation and exchange of information between Geneva and New York could be continued, and what the President's priorities would be in the coming year.

21. His Government particularly welcomed the Council's work in standard-setting, for example through the draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The timely mandates created to address human rights emergencies and the successful completion of the first cycle of the universal periodic review demonstrated that the Council was fully operational in the range of activities under its mandate.

22. **Mr. De Léon Huerta** (Mexico) said that while his delegation welcomed the active role played by the Human Rights Council in the past year and the important decisions made for the promotion and protection of human rights, the Council's recent sessions had been marked by an increasing polarization in the positions of delegations. He asked what could be done to ensure constructive dialogue without confrontation in the Council. He also asked what measures could be implemented to tackle the increase in the Council's workload and what States could do to streamline initiatives presented for its consideration.

23. **Ms. Li** Xiaomei (China) said that her Government had always maintained that human rights issues should be resolved through dialogue and cooperation, without politicization, pressure or naming and shaming of other countries. She thus hoped that the Council would adopt an objective and non-selective approach in its work. In the light of the serious economic difficulties faced by developing countries, the Council should pay more attention to the realization of economic, social, and cultural rights and the right to development in order to foster their economic growth.

24. **Mr. Lukiyantsev** (Russian Federation) said that while the Human Rights Council must respond to human rights emergencies and challenges, equitable and mutually respectful dialogue between member States must also be ensured, and the misuse and politicization of the Council avoided. The outcome of the review of the Council reflected its importance within the United Nations system, and all States must implement the recommendations from that review. He asked for clarification on the objective and content of the draft resolution on the second cycle of the universal periodic review, which would be considered by the General Assembly.

25. **Ms. Bouhamidi** (Morocco), welcoming the interactive dialogue between the President of the Council and the Committee, asked how she viewed the role of national human rights institution within the Council and how the various panels established could contribute to the visibility of human rights issues within the Organization.

26. **Ms. Alsaleh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the targeting of certain countries in the Human Rights Council was part of a growing trend of double standards which ran counter to the Council's purpose and recommendations. She asked what mechanisms the Council could propose to address human rights issues in developed countries, such as racism, discrimination, issues affecting indigenous peoples and immigrants, the treatment of detainees and refugees and violations of the right to development through the use of unilateral economic sanctions against developing countries.

27. **Mr. de Antueno** (Argentina) said that his Government hoped that the interactive dialogue would

help to improve the Council's effectiveness and enhance the enjoyment of human rights in the world. In the view of his delegation, the Council's report should be considered in the General Assembly plenary, and its recommendations considered by the Third Committee. He asked what the President could do to enhance the Council's visibility, and whether her Office had the necessary resources to further disseminate its work.

28. **Mr. Errázuriz** (Chile) said that adjustments, including budgetary adjustments, needed to be made in the light of the volume of special sessions and missions of the Council in the context of the universal periodic review, to ensure efficiency in the presentation of country reports. It was also crucial to guarantee and maintain the independence of the special procedures in a manner that was non-discriminatory and with the appropriate level of urgency.

29. **Ms. Astiasarán Arias** (Cuba), noting that her Government had actively participated in the creation of the Council and in its review process, said that the recent establishment of an Independent expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order was an important development. Her Government was concerned about the selectivity and double standards that had arisen in the consideration of human rights situations, emphasizing the importance of cooperation and respectful dialogue, and of considering human rights issues within the United Nations system in general on a universal and non-discriminatory basis. The sovereignty of States and rights of all peoples to choose their political and social system and their own institutions must be respected.

30. **Mr. Ulibarri** (Costa Rica) said that it would have been more appropriate for the General Assembly to hear the presentation of the President of the Human Rights Council first, leaving the Third Committee to deal with specific recommendations. He urged the Committee to adopt by consensus the draft resolutions on a declaration on human rights education and training, and on an optional protocol on the rights of the child.

31. **Ms. Simovich** (Israel) expressed her Government's satisfaction with the Council's response to grave human rights violations, such as the ongoing killing of civilians in the Syrian Arab Republic and the serious situations in Libya and Côte d'Ivoire. She asked what the Council could do to stop the ongoing deadly rocket attacks by Palestinians against Israel from Gaza.

32. **Ms. Dupuy Lasserre** (President, Human Rights Council), responding to comments and questions from the Committee, said that the Arab Spring and democratic transition of the affected countries was an opportunity for reflection on how to help those countries to strengthen their democratic institutions and the rule of law. The Council stood ready to support those efforts through its special procedures, including on the freedom of association and on the promotion of truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non recurrence, in order to set out good practices and standards and help produce thematic and country-specific recommendations.

33. With respect to the Council's recommendations on the Gaza conflict, it was up to the Council and the delegations most directly involved to take action. The Council had submitted relevant recommendations to the General Assembly, and a number of other initiatives were in place within the United Nations to ensure accountability with respect to allegations of human rights violations.

34. With regard to the special sessions, there were plans to send investigative missions to Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic, if Syrian officials would cooperate, as access to the territory was currently being denied. Such missions were valuable and led to recommendations to help foster stability in those countries. The Council expected its recommendations from the first cycle of the review to be implemented by States, with support from civil society and the international community, including through special procedures and treaty bodies.

35. The United Nations as a whole must help to facilitate technical and financial support, including through the Office of the High Commissioner and the United Nations Development Programme clearing house mechanism. Agencies and potential donors should help to implement recommendations. Cooperation was needed, for example, to support the Independent expert on the situation of human rights in Haiti and ensure that human rights discourse was translated into action.

36. The Human Rights Council had been acting effectively and expeditiously, although there was always room for improvement. While technical cooperation could be provided in serious situations, States' own commitment to improving their human rights situation was essential. Cooperation also meant

refraining from hindering the Council's work. The intimidation of persons exercising their human right to freedom of expression or persons helping to improve the human rights situation in countries was unacceptable.

37. While awaiting the Secretary-General's recommendations on measures and resources to support urgent procedures, it was important to bear in mind that reviewing the Council's budget just once a year made it difficult to move funding from previously planned activities and to react effectively when emergency situations arose. The Council could not wait until the end of the year to implement relevant resolutions. No Council mandate or mission could receive extrabudgetary funding.

38. Regarding polarization and obstacles to constructive dialogue, she had always strived to ensure respectful dialogue, attaching importance to consensus, and she called on delegations to do likewise. It was hoped that consensus could be reached on the recommendations arising from the universal periodic review process in order to improve the work of the Council as well as its efforts on the ground. Mandate holders were bound by a code of conduct, respecting the principles of the United Nations Charter. They must engage in broad-based consultation to achieve consensus when addressing sensitive issues.

39. The main change between the first and second cycle of the universal periodic review was the increase in the meeting time from three to three and a half hours per country and in the sessions by one day, for a total cost of about $27,000 for interpretation services.

40. Ideally, countries should resolve their own human rights issues, but the world was not perfect and the universal periodic review was one means to address such situations. Some countries, including Somalia, Tunisia and Yemen, had come forward to request interactive dialogue or other constructive action from the Council, which was a positive sign. Member States not wishing to address specific human rights situations through Council resolutions had other means at their disposal for requesting assistance from the international community. Her appearance before the Committee was one way to increase the Council's visibility, as were the videoconferences it had been holding with various regional bodies, and its increase in video message broadcasting in general.

41. The Council considered all human rights to be interdependent and indivisible. It was hoped that those rights could be integrated not only into the United Nations system but into national development policies as well. It was up to the countries concerned to take the initiative and maintain open consultations prior to the consideration of draft resolutions within the Council.

42. As to whether the Council would consider the attacks on Israel from Gaza, its recent resolutions had included references to human rights violations from either side of the conflict, as it did whenever country situations — such as in Libya and Côte d'Ivoire — were considered.

43. *Ms. Critchlow (Vice-Chair), took the Chair.*

44. **Ms. Alsaleh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that her delegation wished to hear the President's views on human rights violations in some developed countries. It was mystifying that the Israeli representative, whose remarks had consisted of lies, had neglected to mention that since its establishment, the Human Rights Council had held countless meetings and special sessions to address Israel's slaughter of Arab peoples. Despite the adoption by several United Nations bodies of tens of resolutions condemning the Israeli occupation, Israel persistently refused to abide by them and implement its commitments under international humanitarian and human rights law. As long as Israel continued to occupy Arab lands and commit sadistic violations of human rights, it had no moral standing to judge any human rights situation in the world.

45. Noting the country-specific resolutions targeting only certain countries, she enquired whether problematic human rights situations did not in fact affect every country. She also wondered what mechanisms the Council might propose to address the human rights violations taking place in developed countries, including discrimination, ill-treatment of detainees and refugees and violation of the right to development through unilateral sanctions against developing countries, to name a few.

46. **Ms. Dupuy Lasserre** (President, Human Rights Council) said that human rights violations committed in developed countries were also regarded thematically at each session of the Council, which could not, however, be expected to adopt resolutions on every country at every session. Rather, thought must be given to what the most efficient and effective use of time at a given session might be.

47. Far from considering human rights situations selectively, the Council was aware of situations in all countries and dealt with them on a case-by-case basis, helping countries reflect on how best to tackle their specific challenges. Situations did vary from country to country; for instance, developing countries, which had, on the whole, fewer resources to realize economic, social and cultural rights, might get a lower mark in that respect.

48. Any country participating in the universal periodic review had the opportunity to comment as part of the process. A politicized, accusatory tone did not help, given that there were problems to solve. It was also counterproductive that some countries, even within the universal periodic review, characterized all recommendations from developed countries as being politicized or interventionist. From an institutional standpoint, it would be preferable if countries regarded the review for what it was — a valuable process — regardless of what country had provided particular feedback. If a country under review considered that another country had adversely affected its human rights situation, the issue could be approached internally and in a constructive rather than politicized spirit.

49. **Mr. Sefue** (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the African Group, stressed that continued engagement with all stakeholders on the promotion and protection of human rights was key to arriving at an understanding on contentious issues and moving forward on matters that Member States agreed on. The Human Rights Council played a crucial role in the worldwide protection and mainstreaming of human rights. The African Group welcomed the consensus approach and outcome of recent negotiations on the review of the Council's work, as well as the coordination between the Geneva and New York offices during the review process. The new practice of holding an interactive dialogue between the Committee and the President of the Council would surely be beneficial for all involved. In that connection, the Group welcomed the presentation of the report of the Human Rights Council by its President before the General Assembly and the Committee, enabling those bodies to act on all of the Council's recommendations to the General Assembly. Suggestions on how unforeseen expenses arising from resolutions and decisions of the Council might be financed would be welcome.

50. **Mr. Mac-Donald** (Suriname), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), took note of the report of the Human Rights Council and said that it was a matter of grave concern to the countries of the region when mandate holders exceeded their mandates. Mandate holders should carry out their activities in full respect of the Council's Code of Conduct and engage in constructive dialogue with Member States in the discharge of their mandates.

51. He was pleased to note the adoption by consensus of the outcome of the mandated review of the Council. As the majority of CARICOM countries were not represented in Geneva, the group had taken the opportunity during the discussions held in New York to contribute to the review exercise. CARICOM would continue to support the work of the Council to ensure that it took due account of the principles of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity and eliminated double standards as it considered human rights issues. Hailing the completion of the first cycle of the universal periodic review, in which all Member States had participated, he thanked all partners for the technical and financial assistance extended to CARICOM States, as small States, in preparing their national reports.

52. **Mr. Laro** (Nigeria) said that Nigeria's active engagement with the Human Rights Council stemmed from its respect as a democratic country for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Welcoming the Council's substantial efforts to achieve its mandate, including through its special procedures, he urged the Council to focus more on economic, social and cultural rights, thereby contributing to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Nigeria commended the Council for completing the first cycle of the universal periodic review and for concluding the review of its work and functioning. Also worthy of note was the substantial increase in the number of standing invitations issued to special procedures and in ratifications of the core human rights instruments.

53. The active participation of non-governmental organizations in the activities of the Human Rights Council provided a direct outlet for popular voices and attested to the fact that people around the world expected the United Nations to protect their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

54. **Ms. Hernando** (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Platform on Human Rights Education and Training, said that since the Human Rights Council's 2007 adoption of resolution 6/10, which had launched the initiative on human rights education and training, the Platform had encouraged the active participation of States, Council mechanisms and all other relevant stakeholders. While various aspects of human rights education and training had been developed over the years, no single document had contained all the necessary principles and elements for those either engaged in or seeking such preparation. Though not legally binding, the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training filled that gap. As the first reference document created by the Human Rights Council, the Declaration provided a clear definition of human rights education and training, its scope, principles and the different means to ensure its implementation, also paving the way for follow-up initiatives at all levels, including through international cooperation. The Platform hoped that the procedural resolution under agenda item 64, recommending adoption by the General Assembly of the Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, would receive broad support.

55. **Ms. Velichko** (Belarus) said that 2011 marked the fifth anniversary of the United Nations Human Rights Council. In that short time its strengths and weaknesses had already become apparent and Belarus welcomed the outcome of the review of its work. During the process, the Council had managed to avoid a number of proposed reforms whose sole inspiration had been the political ambitions of certain countries. Belarus opposed any review of the Council's status, including the imposition of additional membership criteria, that undermined the principle of sovereign equality among Member States. It had supported the Council's establishment and, like the majority of Member States, had great hopes for the universal periodic review as an effective, comprehensive and trustworthy mechanism to ensure human rights compliance. Those hopes had largely been borne out. The fact that virtually every country, including Belarus, had passed through the review spoke for itself.

56. It must be noted, however, that the Council's practice of "rubber-stamping" country resolutions had led to a paradoxical situation where the results of reviews and the efforts made by Governments to comply with their recommendation had often been ignored in favour of the politicized evaluations being promoted by groups of countries. Such a practice established a dangerous precedent which threatened to devalue the universal periodic review as an effective process.

57. In the context of the report on the Council's work, her delegation wished to call attention to recent attempts by Western Governments to misrepresent the human rights situation in Belarus using the United Nations human rights mechanism. A particularly egregious example had been the push by the European Union to adopt an anti-Belarus resolution at the Council's seventeenth sessi in June 2011. Belarus categorically rejected any consideration by the Council of such a politicized resolution, which was little more than a compilation of biased and unsubstantiated conclusions drawn by the European Union with respect to the situation in her country. The absence of support for it among the majority of Council members was evidence that it could not be regarded as an accurate reflection of the international community's views. Attempts by Western countries to include the issue of Belarus on the Council's agenda, including through the establishment of special procedures to address it, went against the Council's Institutional Building package, which in 2007 had abolished the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for Belarus and had removed the so-called "Belarus question" from consideration.

58. Her country was meeting its human rights obligations and cooperating with the United Nations human rights machinery, including with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The Government had welcomed a number of special procedures mandate holders, and in August 2011 had extended a personal invitation to the High Commissioner for Refugees to visit the country.

59. Selective country-specific evaluations motivated by political agendas had no place as part of the Council's working methods, particularly given the limited financial resources currently available to implement its decisions and resolutions. Resources should be allocated with the real needs and priorities of Member States in mind with respect to social and economic rights, including assistance to the most vulnerable members of society — women, children, the disabled and the victims of human trafficking.

60. The Council's work should be rid of double standards, disrespect for the principles of sovereign

equality and cultural diversity and the manipulation of human rights for ulterior purposes, all of which hindered genuine progress with respect to international cooperation on human rights.

61. **Ms. Salman** (Malaysia) said that while countries had shown great flexibility in arriving at a fruitful outcome of the Human Rights Council review process, some countries seemed keen to use the Council as a platform to impose their values on others. Reviewing the Human Rights Council should be a continuous effort. Noting the unfortunate trend of politicization of human rights, she stressed that civil and political rights could not be separated from economic, social and cultural rights. It was heartening that the first cycle of the universal periodic review process had concluded successfully, with near-universal participation. Although some recommendations genuinely aimed to improve a given country's human rights system, the recommendations made by allies of the country under review failed to add value to the review process. Moreover, the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance should be strengthened so as to ensure universal participation in the process.

62. Given the steady increase in the Council's workload, adequate resources must be secured to ensure its effective functioning. Special procedures mandate holders must be assessed further, as there were too many on thematic issues, some of which might be studied biennially instead of annually.

63. **Mr. Siahaan** (Indonesia) thanked all Member States for supporting his country's election to the Human Rights Council for the next three-year period. Indonesia would continue to engage constructively with the United Nations human rights machinery and to ensure that all human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development, received equal emphasis in the Council's work. A strong proponent of the universal periodic review mechanism, which had just concluded its first cycle, Indonesia was currently preparing its report for the next cycle in an inclusive manner, involving all relevant stakeholders.

64. Special procedures mandate holders should fulfil their mandates in full compliance with the code of conduct, maintaining professionalism and building trust and closer cooperation with States. The notion set forth in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action that the international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner should be reflected in their work. The Council should conduct an overall review of those mandates in order to avoid duplication of effort.

65. Indonesia remained deeply concerned by the continuing violations of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. His Government continued to support the Palestinian struggle and called on the occupying Power to comply fully with the recommendations contained in the Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict. He hoped that the Council would continue to strengthen the capacity of Member States to comply with their human rights obligations, based on the principles of cooperation and genuine dialogue.

66. **Ms. Bouhamidi** (Morocco) said that, over the past five years, the Human Rights Council had, slowly but surely, helped to create a new culture of active engagement in the protection of human rights. Morocco had been one of the founders of the Human Rights Council, and had been among the first countries to present its initial report in the first cycle of the universal periodic review. It had been an active participant in the review of the Council just completed, which had determined that no major institutional reforms were needed. The Council had demonstrated its ability to respond to emergencies; despite its limited membership, all countries were stakeholders in its work because of the universality of human rights.

67. Morocco had demonstrated its support for the Council through its contributions to the establishment of Council mechanisms and procedures and the preparation of the Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training. It had also contributed $500,000 to the Voluntary Fund for financing of technical assistance programmes to benefit the African countries. It maintained a constructive relationship with the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, which had visited Morocco in 2009, the first such visit in the Arab world. It had welcomed a visit by the Independent Expert in the field of cultural rights in September 2011; and had issued invitations to other special procedures.

68. Initiatives at the national level, however, would have the desired outcome only with collective support and sustained commitment by the international community. Only strengthened cooperation among United Nations bodies, Governments and civil society

through partnerships to build local capacity would enable them to meet the challenges of the promotion and protection of human rights.

69. **Ms. Alsaleh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that her country supported the promotion of all human rights on an equal footing and without the politicization and double standards that led to squandered efforts within United Nations human rights mechanisms. Human rights violations in the occupied Syrian Golan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory were among the most important matters addressed in the report of the Human Rights Council. Over four decades since the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan, and despite the demands by the Council that Israel should implement all relevant resolutions, it continued to obstruct the work of United Nations fact-finding teams, while Israelis guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity continued to boast openly of their crimes, committed with impunity.

70. It was unfortunate that some had succeeded in politicizing the work of the Human Rights Council, exploiting it in the service of their narrow political agendas. While resolutions were adopted condemning human rights violations in some countries, no mechanisms existed to deal with the sadistic human rights abuses committed in the developed world. It was also regrettable that the Council ignored the efforts made by the countries its resolutions targeted to respond to the legitimate demands of their peoples. The resolutions on the situation in her country were based on misleading media information and drafted in a language unprecedented in its hostility, reflecting a willingness to comply with the agendas of countries that were avowed enemies and calling into question the Council's credibility.

71. The current incidents in the Syrian Arab Republic were the result of criminal operations carried out by terrorist gangs, in violation of the rights of the nation and its citizens. An unprecedented number of falsehoods and inaccurate allegations were being reported by a media campaign supported by some Western States that wished to weaken her country, change its political stances, interfere in its domestic affairs and force through their schemes. Despite its difficult circumstances, the Syrian Government had recently prepared and presented its comprehensive periodic report on the human rights situation in the country. It had accepted 98 recommendations and was studying 26 others, attesting to its commitment to promoting human rights at the national level and to the work of the Council.

72. **Mr. Mahmoud** (Egypt) said that Egypt was currently undergoing a major historical transition, fuelled by its commitment to the principles of democracy, transparency, accountability and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. His Government pledged its support for the role of the Human Rights Council in defending human dignity, and its engagement with Council mechanisms in a spirit of cooperation, dialogue and mutual respect. The international community must work as one in dealing with human rights issues within a framework that promoted all rights equally; in that connection, Egypt looked forward to strengthening its efforts to promote the rights to development and food and to combating all forms of discrimination, in accordance with the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action and subsequent documents. Member States must also support the Council by, inter alia, cooperating with its fact-finding missions, especially in the case of peoples living under foreign occupation, and implementing its recommendations.

73. The adoption of the results of the Council's review process by a vote had undermined the aim of gathering universal support for its work. It was the international community's responsibility to ensure the transparency of the Council's work and, most importantly, to prevent it from becoming a political tool that served to entrench the guardianship of a select few countries over human rights issues or that enforced controversial notions with no basis in international humanitarian and human rights law.

74. **Ms. Boiko** (Ukraine) said that her country had always attached great importance to United Nations activities aimed at promoting and protecting human rights, particularly within the framework of the Human Rights Council. Noting with pleasure the progress in the work of the Council and the increase in the number of its resolutions adopted by consensus, she nevertheless pointed out the need for further development of preventive mechanisms.

75. Her delegation welcomed the enhanced transparency in the selection and appointment of special procedures mandate holders and in particular, the fact that national human rights institutions that abided by the Paris Principles could nominate candidates. Ukraine also stressed the importance of

allowing national human rights institutions to take the floor after the State under review at the adoption of the universal periodic review outcome by the Council plenary. Her delegation urged countries to honour their standing invitations to mandate holders, and to commit to report voluntarily on the implementation of the recommendations received in the review. In closing, she reiterated Ukraine's strong commitment to constructive engagement with the Council, bearing in mind its aspiration to renew its membership in 2018.

76. **Ms. Popovici** (Republic of Moldova) said that 2011 had been very important for the future work of the Council because of the intensive discussions regarding the review of its work. Securing adequate financing mechanisms, in particular for special procedures mandate holders, was one of the issues requiring the close attention of all Member States. Openness and cooperation between Governments and special procedures constituted a key element to build confidence with the final aim of improving human rights situations in all countries. In that connection, the Republic of Moldova had extended a standing invitation to United Nations special procedures.

77. During its universal periodic review, her Government had involved civil society and international partners in the evaluation and drafting of its report, in conformity with Council guidelines. The fact that her Government, ahead of the wider process of national consultation on the results of its review, had accepted the recommendations made and would be examining a number of them in a broader context indicated that the exercise had the potential to yield valuable solutions in terms of improving national human rights policies. The recommendations constituted a valuable basis for further amendments to her country's national action plan on human rights for 2011 to 2014. The Republic of Moldova had also pledged to submit a midterm progress report on its implementation of the recommendations to the Human Rights Committee.

78. She thanked those delegations that had taken part in her country's universal periodic review for their earnest efforts to understand its particularities in the area of human rights, which stemmed from the transitional nature of Moldova's economic and political model. Follow-up activities would be coordinated by the UNDP offices in Moldova, its regional centre in Bratislava and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, under the auspices of the Government of Moldova. While inroads had yet to be made in such areas as judiciary reform and protecting human rights in the Transnistria region, which had been out of Government control for over two decades, significant reforms had already been carried out under the national action plan on human rights. Her country's close cooperation with European Union member States and institutions and its commitment to the core human rights treaties as a party to most of them would surely yield further progress.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.